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Gown and Dagger

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Concern is growing among scholars that the academic gown may join the cloak and dagger as symbols of spying. The concern was obvious at the American Anthropological association convention in Pittsburgh.

Ralph L. Beals, a California anthropologist and former president of the association, reported on the alarming infiltration of the spy influence into supposedly legitimate scholarly research abroad. He found that United States intelligence agents posing as anthropologists were at work in some countries—"anthropological spies," he called them—and that young scholars who received government grants later were questioned by intelligence agents for political information.

The amount of intelligence work conducted under the guise of academic research is, of course, secret. Enough suspicious incidents have come to light to be disquieting. Eighteen months ago, Project Camelot, an army sponsored study of revolutionary change in Chile, was abruptly canceled after it caused a furor in that country. A government sponsored "technical assistance" program in Vietnam run by Michigan State university in the 1950's seems to have used CIA operatives.

The anthropologists decided that spying was a sufficient danger to academic pursuits to establish a set of "ethical guidelines" for scholars on government sponsored projects. Their concern is understandable, for the suspicion that spies are masquerading as scholars can destroy the effectiveness of legitimate studies abroad. As Beals told the anthropologists, "constraint, deception and secrecy have no place in science."

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